

REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the previously standing rejections on "non-statutory" double patenting grounds is respectfully requested.

With the above amendments, claims 1 and 14-32 remain pending of which claims 1, 26 and 31 are currently amended. Claims 14-22 remain withdrawn for purposes of examination as a result of an earlier Restriction Requirement.

It is noted that the only issues presently outstanding involve three (3) rejections of claims 1 and 23-32 on "non-statutory" double patenting grounds. Namely, claims 1 and 23-32 were given separate rejections "under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting" over the claimed disclosures of each of the inventors' prior U.S. Patents Nos.: 5,532,850; 5,838,399 and 6,184,963. Accordingly, applicants have decided, at this time, to submit a Terminal Disclaimer to thereby remove these rejections.

The submission of the accompanying Terminal Disclaimer, should not be construed as an acquiescence of the merits of any one or more of the above-noted three (3) rejections. Rather, the Terminal Disclaimer is being submitted, at this time, as a practicality insofar as removing these only standing issues in consideration of rendering the application in condition for early allowance.

The filing of the Terminal Disclaimer as well as executing of the same by an Attorney of Record (of the below-named Law Firm) are consistent with the rules and USPTO guidelines concerning the manner for obviating rejections on such "non-statutory" double patenting grounds. Applicants, through their undersigned representative, submit that the accompanying Terminal Disclaimer is in proper form consistent with the applicable requirements pursuant to 37 CFR §1.321(b)(c). Acceptance and formal entry of the same is respectfully requested.

Editorial revisions of a formal nature are being implemented in each of independent claims 1, 26 and 31 with regard to the "wherein" clauses thereof. Specifically, the expression "with respect to a sectional view" is being inserted therein to highlight that the expression "a second metal film formed over the first metal film" or "an aluminum film formed over the first metal film" relates to a multi-layered or composite layer relationship, in a vertical sense of those two metal films comprising the scanning signal line, in which also the second metal film (or aluminum film) has a top surface with a width smaller than a width of a bottom surface of the first metal film at least in a crossover portion of the scanning signal line and the image signal line. Although the above insertions within the "wherein" clauses of claims 1, 26 and 31 are unnecessary, they are nonetheless being inserted to further enhance the clarity/intent of the subject matter set forth therein.

The claims of the present application particularly emphasize the type of construction of the scanning signal line without regard to the specific details of the gate electrode of the thin-film transistor (TFT). In this regard, claims 1 and 26 are being further revised so as to remove any unnecessary implication (for purposes of patentability) of a structural connection between the gate electrode and the scanning line, unlike that set forth in the claims of the Someya et al '850 patent. Claim 1 as well as claim 26, as now amended, state that the TFT is applied with a gate signal from the scanning signal line. Similarly to the previously existing language, the present wording likewise implies that any gate electrode associated with the TFT may be separate from or an integral part of the scanning signal line. On the other hand, with regard to the cited prior U.S. Patent No. 5,532,850, the claimed disclosure therein features "scanning signal lines including a first conductive film and a second conductive film laminated on said first conductive film, ..." and the "gate electrode [is]

connected to said first conductive film and left uncovered by said second conductive film ...," which is substantially different from that called for in both claims 1 and 26 of the present application. While the independent claims according to the prior Someya et al Patent No. 5,532,850 feature a one conductive layered gate electrode, the claims of the present application are not necessarily limited thereto.

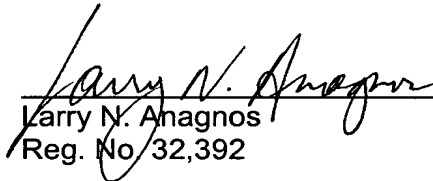
It is a main objective of the invention to cover a scheme with a construction which has the effect of leveling a surface of an insulating film formed between the scanning signal line and the image signal line at least in a crossover portion thereof. Such a construction would, for example, prevent breakage of the image signal line. Having shown that a clear line of patentable demarcation remains between that of the present claimed subject matter and the claimed disclosures of each of the above-named prior Someya et al patents, especially with the current amendments made to the claims, favorable action therefor of this response is respectfully requested.

Additional differences also exist between the claims of the present application with those of the above three named prior Someya et al patents. For example, Someya et al in U.S. Pat. No. 5,838,399 uses expressions such as "with respect to a plan view" in terms of the area being covered and in U.S. Pat. No. 6,184,963, the claimed disclosure therein includes such set forth language as "a step configuration of a sidewall of said scanning signal line, " as examples thereof of differences of the claimed disclosures therein, with that of the present application. Moreover, it is noted, a careful review of the claimed disclosures of the cited three prior Someya et al patents shows that a number of structural/combined details therein are not necessarily specified as such with regard to the present claimed subject matter.

Therefore, for the above reasons along with the accompanying properly executed Terminal Disclaimer and the fee amount thereof, favorable action on the currently amended claims as well as an early formal notification of allowability of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR §1.136. Please charge any shortage in the fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, to the Deposit Account of Antonelli, Terry, Stout & Kraus, LLP, Dep. Acct. No. 01-2135 (501.26071CC8), and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
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